

# Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans Department of Human Rights

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Annual Report  
August 2002



# Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans

## Annual Report

### August 2002

#### Commissioners

**Beverly Allen**

*Des Moines—term expires April 2004*

**George C. Baugh**

*Pella—term expires April 2006*

**Deborah Berry**

*Waterloo—term expires April 2006*

**Theresa Clark-Kline**

*Ft. Madison—term expires April 2004*

**James Hester**

*Davenport—term expired April 2002*

**Jamie Howard**

*Davenport—term expires April 2004*

**Isaiah Johnson**

*Denison—term expires April 2006*

**Joseph McGill**

*Cedar Rapids—term expires April 2004*

**Jerome Thomas**

*Dubuque—term expires April 2004*

**Robert Tyson**

*Waterloo—term expires April 2004*

**Rose Vasquez, ex officio**

*Director, Department of Human Rights*

#### Staff

**Kim Cheeks**

*Program Planner*

**Traevena Potter-Hall**

*Director, resigned July 2001*

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Kim Cheeks, Program Planner

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## Executive Summary

**Rose Vasquez**

*Acting Director, Fiscal Year 2002*



In July of 2001, our former director Traevena Potter-Hall resigned. Left with one staff person, the commission continued to function and expand from August 2001 until July 2002, with the hard work of program coordinator Kim Cheeks.

In Fiscal Year 2002, the commission served as a voice for issues facing Iowa's African Americans, and continued its participation and collaborations with statewide organizations and initiatives. The commission also conducted quarterly meetings, and served as a publishing clearinghouse and information referral agency. The commission continued to advocate on the behalf of the needs and concerns of our constituency.

We continued publication of

the quarterly newsletter to help educate the public of the various issues and programs in Iowan communities. The commission staff maintained updates to the website, brochures, and other sources of information. The commission also served on advisory boards and committees on a variety of issues across the state, providing Iowa's African American population with much needed representation.

In June 2002, Dr. Ruth White of Cedar Rapids was appointed by Governor Vilsack as the new director of the commission. With new leadership, the commission looks forward to another year of continued service to the African American citizens of Iowa with your cooperation and valuable input.

## FY 2002 Budget/Expenditures

Total Appropriation	\$119,335.00
Total Expenditures	\$74,498.75
% of Budget Expended	61%

# ♦Mission♦

The Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans pursuant to Chapter 216A.142 of the Iowa Code is legislatively mandated to report on the status of Iowans of African American descent. The Commission, with the support of staff, community leaders, public and private agencies and organizations, will consider, review, and recommend programs, services, policies, legislation and administrative rules that will improve the quality of life for Iowa's African American population.

# ♦Vision Statement♦

The Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans exists to promote the interests of African Americans in the State of Iowa and in doing so, fosters the well being of the State's entire citizenry.

In the spirit of equity, inclusion and responsiveness this Commission, in partnership with the broader African American community shall:

- Educate itself and others regarding the needs of the state's African American citizenry and regarding the issues that significantly impact them.
- Inform the broader African American community, legislative branches of government and the general public of those needs and issues.
- Advocate for positive changes in policy, practices and programs that potentially or actually negatively affect African American Iowans.
- Network with organizations and individuals on behalf of the state's African American population.

# ♦Agenda♦

## Education

- Increase African American teachers in Iowa*
- Increase Diversity Training for Education Professionals*
- Expand Multicultural Curricula*

## Health

- Decrease the Disproportionate Infant Mortality Rate of African Americans*
- Increase Health Promotion of African American Iowans*

## Criminal Justice

- Decrease the Disproportionate Incarceration Rate of African American Iowans*
- Decrease Racial Profiling*

## Economic Development

- Decrease the Disproportionate Unemployment Rate of African American Iowans*
- Support African American Entrepreneurship*

# ♦Programs and Initiatives♦

## Outreach

- Homes of Oakridge, summer mentor program
- Iowa State University Minority Students Internships/Job Placement
  - Bethel AME Church
  - Princess Zorah Chapter No. 10 OES
  - North Star Lodge No. 2 Prince Hall Affiliation
  - Lighthouse Homeless Youth Shelter
- African-American Women's Focus Group on Infant Mortality
  - Woodbury County Minority Health Coalition
- Des Moines University Minority Students Association
  - Polk County Department of Health
- Kyles AME Zion Church, Missouri Annual Conference
  - NCCJ Walk-As-One

## Education

- I'll Make Me a World in Iowa

## Advocacy

- Introduced a bill to combat racial profiling in Iowa law enforcement

## Newsletter

- Due to budget and time constraints, only one newsletter was distributed, in Spring/Fall 2001

## Collaborative Initiatives

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Center — National Holiday Advisory Committee
  - Friends of Iowa Women Prisoners
  - Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault Women of Color
- Disproportionate Minority Confinement Committee of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council
  - Minority Health Coalition Project (Scott County)
- Tobacco Control Diversity and Disparities Workgroup (TCD & DW)
  - Iowa Caregivers Association
  - Diversity Conference Advisory Committee
- Department of Public Health Minority Health Advisory Board

## Martin Luther King, Jr. Ceremony

•On January 21, the 13<sup>th</sup> annual celebration commemorating Dr. King was held at the State Historical Building. The program consisting of the traditional bell ringing, singing, honoring and an uplifting spiritual address, given by Millard Southern of Drake University. Marian Coleman, Leo Rooff, and Rudy Simms, Jr., were awarded the MLK Lifetime Achievement Awards for demonstrating a commitment to improving racial equality and opportunities for people in their neighborhoods and communities.